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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE  
23 October 1954

TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

CD/ED

SUBJECT: Uruguayan Elections of 28 November 1954

1. Offices to be filled: All seats in the nine-member National Council (NCG--Uruguay's plural executive), the 31-member Senate, and the 99-member Chamber of Representatives, and all seats in executive and legislative bodies of the country's 19 departments.

2. Parties or factions participating

A. Colorado Party: This party advocates advanced labor laws, old age and unemployment insurance, and government ownership of enterprises serving the public. Important factions of the party are (1) List 14, the conservative and capitalistic wing headed by Cesar Batlle Pacheco, (2) the very liberal List 15 headed by Luis Batlle Berres, and (3) the Blancoacedevistas, a group with divergent interests headed by Eduardo Blanco Acevedo.

B. Nationalist Party: Very conservative, this party generally has opposed the Colorado Party as a matter of principle, especially in connection with increased inter-American ties and Uruguay's part in hemisphere defense. The party's main strength is among the large landowners and in the interior. Party leader is Luis Alberto de Herrera. A threat to his control is the faction led by Senator Daniel Fernandez Crespo.

C. Independent Nationalist Party: More democratic than the Nationalists but more conservative in fiscal matters than the Colorados, members of this party have been described as "New Deal Republicans."

D. Civic Union Party: This Catholic group, whose policies are usually in accordance with papal encyclicals, generally supports the administration.

State Dept. review completed

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E. Socialist Party: The appeal of this party has been generally undercut by the Colorados' practical program designed to appeal to labor.

F. Communist Party: The Communists' most consistent line has been hostility toward the United States and closer relations with the Orbit. Uruguayan social advances and a general lack of poverty reduce the effectiveness of the Communists' traditional appeal.

3. Outstanding personalities:

A. Batlle Berres, Luis: Leader of the Colorado List 15. Not enthusiastic about the plural executive form of government, chiefly because he would like to be president again. Generally considered reasonably friendly toward the United States. Strongly anti-Communist. Has openly opposed Peron of Argentina.

B. Batlle Pacheco, Cesar: Leader of the Colorado List 14. Long-time friend of the United States. Anti-Communist. Opposed to Peron, but not as outspoken in his criticism as other Colorados.

C. Herrera, Luis Alberto de: Ultraconservative leader of the Nationalists. Considered hostile to the United States, pro-Franco, and pro-Peron.

4. Present Party Strengths:

PARTIES	NATIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT	SENATE	CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES
Colorado Party	6	18	53
Nationalist Party	3	10	31
Independent Nationalist	-	2	7
Civic Union Party	-	1	4
Socialist Party	-	-	2
Communist Party	-	-	2
TOTAL	9	31	99

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5. Principle issues: It is expected that the List 15 Colorados will advocate continued state intervention in the economic system for the benefit of labor, that the List 14 Colorados will advocate a more moderate course with respect to government in business, and that the Nationalists will oppose the Colorados as a matter of principle.

6. Principal factors influencing the outcome: Because of Uruguay's unusual electoral laws, it is expected that the Colorado Party will continue in control of the NCG and the legislature. For this election, however, the more conservative List 14 and the Blancoacevedistas are submitting a combined list of candidates for the NCG. The American embassy in Montevideo reports that the List 14-Blancoacevedista agreement introduces a major element of doubt in the elections, heretofore more or less conceded to List 15.

7. Background: These elections will be the first held under the plural executive form of government adopted in 1951. Both the Colorados and the Nationalists are badly split, and the council form of government is itself a subject of controversy--a modified form of this system contributed to the establishment of the 1933-1937 dictatorship.

The only parties with well defined ideologies in Uruguay are the Civic Union, the Socialists, and the Communists.

Uruguay's unusual and complex electoral system encourages party factionalism. Under this system which in effect provides for a combined primary and general election, the voter votes at the same time for the candidates and for the party of his choice. Each party lists its candidates under a lema, roughly the same thing as the party ticket in the United States. It is possible, also, for factions within a party to enter sublemas, or separate lists of candidates under the party's lema. There could be, for example, three Colorado Party lists representing List 14, List 15, and the Blancoacevedistas. The list receiving the majority of the votes cast for the three lists is credited automatically with the votes of the other two. In 1950 the Colorado candidate was elected president because the three factions of his party polled 178,000 more votes than the sole Nacionalista candidate, although the latter polled 94,000 more votes than those cast for any one of the Colorado candidates.

Election of the NCG: The party receiving a plurality of all votes cast wins six of the 9 places on the NCG, while the runner-up party receives the other 3 places. The sublema receiving the most votes within the winning party will control

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all 6 of the party's places on the NCG, unless the runner-up sublema receives more than one sixth of the party's total vote. In that case the second sublema would receive one place on the NCG. The 3 minority seats are distributed on a proportional basis among the sublemas of the party receiving the second highest number of votes.

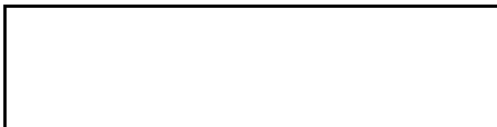
Election of senators: Senators are elected from the country at large on a proportional representation basis. Senate seats are distributed within a party in proportion to the number of votes received by the various sublemas.

Election of representatives: Representatives are elected by a system of proportional representation taking into account all the votes for each party over the country as a whole. Each of the 19 departments, however, shall have at least two representatives.

8. Informed opinion on outcome: It is generally expected that the Colorados will win, but there is no consensus as to which faction will be the victor.

9. Significance for United States security interests: A Colorado victory, regardless of which faction wins control of the NCG, will mean no basic change in Uruguay's international or internal policies.

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